

# DEHYDRATION

A person needs a certain amount of fluids; mostly water, for the systems in their body to work properly. Not enough fluids can affect every system in the body including the heart, kidneys and even the lungs. When a person loses water from their body more quickly than they take it into their body, a problem can occur. This can happen quickly or slowly. It is called **dehydration** and it is a big health problem.

## **Signs of fluid loss include:**

- Dry skin
- Dry cracked lips
- Less elasticity to the skin
- Going to the bathroom less often
- Strong-smelling, dark brown or dark yellow urine
- Less urine
- Fast weight loss
- Doesn't want to participate in activities
- Sleepy, hard to wake up
- Fast heartbeat, low blood pressure
- Fever
- Reddened skin or yellowish color to skin
- Sunken eyes

## **What can cause fluid loss?**

- Loose watery bowel movements/vomiting
- Less fluid intake
- Some medications like "water pills"
- Too much of a medication in someone's blood
- Infections
- Need other people for food and drink
- Fever
- Some health problems like Diabetes
- Hot weather or a long time in a hot place
- Exercise that causes too much sweating
- Fast breathing for a long time

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## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

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**Call 911** if the person is:

- Looks very sick
- Has gray skin
- Won't wake up

**When you think there may be a problem:**

- Call or talk to your nurse or supervisor
- If the person is sick, call the doctor
- Give small amounts of fluid often
- Write down the amount of their urine or bowel movement
- Write down how much the person drinks and eats
- Make sure the room is not too hot or too cold and the person is wearing the right kind of clothes
- Talk to other staff about what you see

